COVENANT-RENOUNCERS, DESPERATE-APOSTATES.

Opened in

TWO LETTERS, written by a *Christian* Friend, to Mr. *WILLIAM GURNAL* of *Lavenham* in the County of *Suffolk*.

Which may indefinitely serve as an Admonition to all such *Presbyterian* Ministers, or others, who have forced their Consciences, not only to leap over, but to *Renounce* their Solemn *Covenant*-Obligation, *to endeavour a Reformation according to God's Word, and the Extirpation of all Prelatical Superstition*; and contrary thereunto, conform to those Superstitious Vanities, against which they had so Solemnly SWORN.

As also, to caution all that fear God, to take heed and beware of such men, and not adventure to attend upon their Preaching, lest they provoke God to jealousie, and pull down the Wrath of *Jehovah* upon themselves.

Together with an *APPENDIX* concerning the *Church of England* in general.

But all the Princes said unto all the Congregation, We have SWORN unto them by the Lord God of Israel: Now therefore we may not touch them, ------LEST WRATH BE UPON US, BECAUSE OF THE OATH which we sware unto them. Josh. 9. 19, 20.

——Shall he prosper? shall he escape that doth such things? SHAL HE BREAK THE COVENANT, and be delivered? As I live, saith the Lord God, Surely in the place where the King dwelleth that made him King, whose OATH HE DESPISED, and whose COVENANT HE BRAKE, even with him in the midst of Babylon shall he die. Ezek. 17. 15, 16.

Behold, ye trust in lying words, that cannot profit. Will ye steal, Murder, and commit Adultery, and SWEAR FALSLY, and burn Incense unto Baal,—— And come and stand before Me in this House which is called by my Name, and say, We are delivered to do all these abominations? Jer. 7. 8, 9, 10.

Dreadful is the Indignation of God, revealed against *Covenant-breakers*: But what his Wrath shall be against COVENANT-RENOUNCERS, Who can say?

O my soul, come not thou into their secret: Unto their Assembly, mine honour be be not thou united. Gen. 49. 6.

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To all those that love God, and Jesus Christ in Sincerity and Truth, partakers of like precious Faith with the rest of his Saints and faithful followers, living in or near unto the Parish of Lavenham *in the County of* Suffolk, *and elsewhere, to whom these Papers shall come.*

Christian Brethren,

I Know not whether you have taken up the observation before me, or not, but it is worthy of your *serious* consideration, *That an Enemy under the vizor of a Friend, is far more dangerous, then an open and professed Adversary.* David in his dayes took signal notice of this evil-Spirit, manifesting it self in wicked and ungodly men; for, speaking of the wicked man, he expresseth himself thus; *He hath put forth his hands against such as be at peace with him: he hath* BROKEN HIS COVENANT. *The words of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart: his words were softer than oyl, yet were they drawn swords;* Psal. 55. 20, 21. Now that hatred which coucheth it self under the *smoothest* words, and *softest* expressions, is most sharp, and deeply piercing: and that enmity which cloatheth it self with pretended friendship, is most cruel and diabolical. *Art thou in health, my Brother?* was *Joab's* salutation to *Amasa, and took him by the beard to kiss him;* when immediately *he smote him with the sword in the fifth rib, and shed out his bowels to the ground,* 2 Sam. 20. 9, 10. *Judas* also when he betrayed our Lord Jesus, saluted him with, *Hail Master, and kissed him,* Mat. 26. 49. And it is beyond all doubt that Jesus *Christ* hath no greater enemies in the world at this day, than many, who pretend very highly for his interest, and glory;

and would be accounted the only promoters of his Worſhip and Service amongſt men: The *Scribes* and *Phariſees* themſelves, that *generation of Vipers*, pretended high for Religion and Godlineſs, and were found very buſie in *building the Tombs of the Prophets, and garniſhing the Sepulchres of the Righteous*, profeſſing, that if they *had been in the dayes of their fathers, they would not have been partakers with them in the* † Matth. *blood of the Prophets* †; and yet nevertheleſs by their works 23.29,30 they witneſſed againſt themſelves, that they *allowed the deeds* *Luke 11 *of their fathers**, in killing the Prophets; and by their cruel 48. perſecutions of the Saints, brought upon their own heads *all the righteous blood ſhed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel, unto the blood of Zacharias, the ſon of Barachias, ſlain be-* † Matth, *tween the Temple and the Altar* †. Suitable hereunto is that 23.33,35 alſo of the Prophet *Iſaiah*, *Your Brethren that hated you, that caſt you out for my Name-ſake, ſaid, Let the Lord be glorified*; *Iſa.66.5.* And the Great *Anti-Chriſt*, or *MAN of SIN*, * 2 Theſ (as the Apoſtle ſtiles him) *ſitteth in the Temple of God**; as 2, 4. though he were the firſt-born of his ſons and ſervants, ſoley devoted to the promotion of his Worſhip amongſt the children of men: when nevertheleſs he is *Chriſts* moſt deadly enemy, *whom the Lord ſhall conſume with the Spirit of his mouth, and deſtroy with the brightneſs of his coming*; 2 Theſſ. 2.8. From theſe premiſes I ſhall commend unto you (*Chriſtian Friends*) the following Inferences and Deductions:

1. Let it ſeem no ſtrange thing unto you, that a perſon of ſuch ſeeming piety and zeal for God and Godlineſs, as he to whom theſe Papers relate, hath been eſteemed, (with divers others) ſhould notwithſtanding put forth his hand to the ſervice of the *Beaſt*, and the *falſe Prophet*: for the truth is, *Myſtery Babylon, the Mother of Harlots, and Abominations of* † Revel. *the Earth* †, could never have aſcended ſo high upon her 17. 5. throne of dignity and honour in the world, had ſhe not had ſome from time to time amongſt her ſons, very eminent, both for parts and abilities: and likewiſe for ſeeming Piety and Zeal for God: When once Satan can prevail with ſuch men as theſe, to engage in his work, he may ſay of them, (as *David* of the Sword of *Goliah*) *There are none like to theſe*, for

for the promoting of his Kingdom of darkneſs in the world; eſpecially if they retain any competent eſteem in the minds of men, and paſs in common repute for *good Chriſtians*.

2. Let the premiſes alſo (my *dear Brethren*) teach you this word of *Chriſtian care* and *caution*, *viz.* to beware of all compliance with men of this character; for he that cometh againſt you with a *kiſs*, and a ſalute, *Art thou in health, my Brother?* may ſooner *ſhed your bowels on the ground*, than he that appeareth in open hoſtility with Sword and Spear: And as the ſharpeſt hook hath oft-times the pleaſanteſt bait, ſo the Devil and his Agents do frequently make uſe of ſome excellent Truths and gloſſes, to prevail with men to ſwallow the moſt deſtructive Errors and Superſtitions: *Thus it is written*, ſaith the Devil to Chriſt, when notwithſtanding he tempted him to the greateſt diſloyalty to God his Father imaginable. *A little leaven* (ſaith the Apoſtle, 1 *Cor.* 5. 6.) *leaveneth the whole lump.* Therefore let all ſuch as deſire to *worſhip* God *in Spirit and in Truth*; and who tremble to provoke him, by joyning with Superſtition and Profaneneſs in his Worſhip and Service, avoid all communion with ſuch men as theſe, in their way of Worſhip, as they would eſcape a dangerous ſnare of death.

Fœnum habet in cornu: longe fugiam.

A lock of hay ty'd to their horn, they have:
Far from them let us flee, our ſelves to ſave.

3. Yet once more, Let all the Children of God be from hence informed, how great ſervice thoſe do for God, and the Chriſtian World, by whoſe means the wickedneſs of ſuch men as theſe, ſhall be detected and laid open. For, 1. This is an happy means to put a ſtop to their further progreſs in this evil way; and conſequently to prevent much danger that might otherwiſe enſue to the precious ſouls of many, who poſſibly might be infected with, and enſnared by their evil practices: *They ſhall proceed no further* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *for their folly ſhall be made manifeſt unto all men.* The detection and diſcovery of the madneſs and folly of an evil courſe or undertaking, is an excellent preſervative unto others

2 *Tim.* 3. 9.

others from ſuffering themſelves to be entangled therein. *Surely in vain is the net ſpread in the ſight of any bird*, ſaith the Wiſe-man, *Prov.* 1. 17. And 2dly. It is an opportunity of great advantage put into the hands of theſe evil-minded men themſelves alſo, which through the bleſſing of God, may happily tend to their repentance and reſtoration: for, that which more private addreſſes will not do, God is ſometimes pleaſed to effect by more publick ſhame: And certainly if ever any man ſtood in need of this Antidote, againſt the Poiſon of his own deceitful heart, *viz.* to be brought to reflect upon himſelf with ſhame, and to cover his face with ſackcloth and aſhes, ſurely Mr. *Gurnal* is the man: who if we compare himſelf with himſelf, may not his Motto be,

Qui me in me quærit, non me, ut me, invenerit in me. i. e.

To find me, in me, who-e'r ſhall me ſeek,
Will in me, to me, never find me like.

One while he appears as if *wrapt up into the third Heavens*, with zeal for God: another while as if drawn like *a Star from Heaven* by the *tail of the Dragon*. One while up goes the *Covenant*, and down with *Epiſcopacy* and Superſtitious Inventions; another while down with the *Covenant*, and up with *Prelacy* and *Common-prayer-book-devotion*. One while *all for Chriſt*, and a *Reformation according to God's Word*: another while *a little* (at leaſt) *for Antichriſt* and the *rebuilding of the Synagogue of Satan*. One while he appears as one of the *houſhold of Faith*, fitting and putting on the *Chriſtian Armour*; another while as if he were of the houſe and linage of that Soldier in *Plautus*, who repreſents his prudence in war thus:

Quà illi pugnabant maximè, ego fugiebam maxime. i. e.

Where men were fierceſt in the fight,
I made away by ſwifteſt flight.

Neither is Mr. *Gurnal* alone in theſe horrible defilements, hateful to the Soul of God & his Saints; but he is compaſſed about with a *Cloud of Witneſſes*, (even in the County where himſelf liveth, as well as elſewhere) men of the ſame order of *Antichriſtian Prieſthood*, and Brethren in the ſaid iniquity with himſelf; Witneſs Mr. *Grey* of *Cavendiſh*, who upon one Lord's-day preached his *Farewel-Sermon*, and argued very ſtrongly

ſtrongly, and with many conſiderations, the unlawfulneſs of *Common-prayer-book-conformity*; and ſo took his *Farewel* of the Congregation: But by the very next Lord's-day following, he had (it ſeems) met with ſome *Epiſcopal eye-ſalve*, which wrought ſo effectually with him, that it immediately cloſed his *right-eye*, by which the Lord's-day before, he ſaw ſuch great deformity in Common-prayer-book-devotion: and alſo opened his *left-eye* to ſee *Conformity-truth* in that aſſertion, which the Apoſtle gives notice to be only *ſuppoſed* by ſome in his dayes, viz. *that Gain is Godlineſs*, 1 Tim. 6. 5. and then with much zeal and heat preached up *Subjection to higher Powers*: not conſidering that there are Powers higher than thoſe on earth, which whether it be right to obey rather, or before men, or not; judge ye.

To theſe may alſo be added for company Mr. *Hudſon* of *Capel*, Mr. *Knights* of *Ipſwich*, Dr. *Hariſon* of *Hadly*, Mr. *Blackerby* of *Stowe*, with more than a *good many* beſides, who have all bowed themſelves to the *Whore of Babylon*; and given hoſtages to the *Prince of the power of the Air*, that they will never make any great inroad into his Kingdom in the world; or do any great execution upon the powers of ſin and darkneſs amongſt men. Theſe all, (with many others of their fellows and companions in theſe *broad wayes*) have given the world a lively teſtimony, that *the Dragon, that old Serpent, which is the Devil and Satan*, is not yet *bound, and caſt into the bottomleſs pit, and ſhut up from deceiving the Nations any more*†: But contrarywiſe, that he hath been at work in the world, and *with his tail hath drawn ſome of the Stars from Heaven, and caſt them to the Earth*. A ſmall pittance of the glory and honour, with the profits and pleaſures of this world, in conjunction (poſſibly) with the fear of ſuffering for *Chriſts ſake*, hath cauſed many of the ſame *Tribe* and *Coat* with theſe, to quit their ſtation in *Chriſt's Vineyard*, and give the right-hand of fellowſhip to his deadly enemy, *Antichriſt*; yea, and to *renounce* their *Covenanted Reformation*, &c. So that it may be too truly ſaid of Mr. *Gurnal* in reſpect of theſe abominations,

† *Rev.* 20. 3.

——*Flagrat vitio gentiſque, ſuoque.* i.e.
He burneth with a vice, that is
His fellows vice, as well as his.

Who

Who encourage and ſtrengthen the hands one of another, much like as the *Carpenter* and the *Goldſmith* did, of whom the Prophet *Iſaiah* ſpeaketh†, juſtifying each one his Brother, as *Jeruſalem juſtified her ſiſters, Sodom* and *Samaria* ‖. Though amongſt this *Synagogue* of *Satan*, and corrupted Tribe of Prieſts, Mr. *Gurnal* (poſſibly) may have merited the ſhame and ignominy to be reputed one of the *firſt-born ſons of folly*, in aſcending up to the top of ſo high a mountain of oppoſition to, and conteſtation with, that generation of men, and way of worſhip; into the polluted gulf whereof he hath now deſcended; and in the judgment of the Apoſtle *Paul*, *made himſelf a tranſgreſſor, in building again the things which he deſtroyed* ‖; or rather labouring in vain ſo to do: either not believing, or elſe not duly conſidering, that they that *partake with Babylon in her ſins, ſhall alſo receive of her plagues*†: which whether it be believed or not, ſhall certainly be fulfilled, and *her plagues ſhall come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine, and ſhe ſhall be utterly burnt with fire: for ſtrong is the Lord God, who judgeth her* †. Then ſhall every one that hath made himſelf a *bondſlave* to her, *call unto the Mountains and Rocks, to fall on them, and hide them from the face of him that ſitteth on the Throne, and from the Wrath of the Lamb. For the great Day of his Wrath* ſhall *come, and who ſhall be able to ſtand?* ‖ Therefore be aſtoniſhed, O *Gurnal*, with thy fellows, and tremble all ye that have been perfidious in the Covenant of your God: *For he will enter into the houſe of him that ſweareth falſly by his Name* ‖, and *will be a ſwift Witneſs againſt the Falſe-Swearer* †; yea, *the ſinners in Sion ſhall be afraid, fearfulneſs ſhall ſurprize the Hypocrite* ‖.

But (to draw to a concluſion) I have but one thing more to acquaint my *Chriſtian Friends* with, before they and I part, for the preſent; and that is, That theſe Letters were ſent to Mr. *Gurnal* many months ago, ever ſince which time, until now, I have waited in expectation that ſome good effect would have been wrought upon him by them; but finding by due obſervation that he ſtill remains under the guilt, and in the practice of his ſinful conformity, to the diſhonour of God, and the great ſcandal of Religion; I have therefore expoſed the written Copy to your view, (the former of the two is *verbatim* as it was ſent; the latter, is the ſubſtance of what was ſent him, a little abreviated) Let me (for a cloſe) caution all thoſe unto whoſe view this Manuſcript may happen to come, to be warned by other mens falls, to look well to your ſtanding†; *leſt you alſo be led away with the errour of the wicked*, and *fall from your own ſtedfaſtneſs* ‖. The Lord grant that theſe Papers may be a means to preſerve you from all pollution and defilement in the Superſtitions of *Babylon*, that her plagues may not be your portion†.

Farewell.

A

‖ *Iſa.* 41. 7.
‖ *Ezek.* 16. 51, 52
‖ *Gal.* 2. 18
† *Revel.* 18. 4.
† *ver.* 8.
‖ *Rev.* 6. 16, 17.
‖ *Zec.* 4. 5
† *Mal.* 3. 5.
‖ *Iſa.* 33. 14.
† 1 *Cor.* 10. 12.
‖ 2 *Pet.* 3. 17.
† *Revel.* 18. 4.

A LETTER sent to Mr. William Gurnal, *the 5th of August*, 1663.

SIR,

WHether it was my happineſs, or unhappineſs, to hear of, and be in ſome degree (though remotely) acquainted with your gifts and parts in preaching; your (ſometimes) ſeeming zeal for God, piety, and holineſs of life, *&c.* I cannot well determine: for though all manner of knowledge, either of perſons or things, be in ſome kind or other beneficial, it being an undoubted maxime, that, *Verum & Bonum convertuntur*: yet ſome knowledge may be accompanied with ſuch circumſtances that may render it more burdenſom and offenſive, than commodious or advantagious. You have of late made ſuch a diſcovery of your ſelf, & unvailed (your *face*, ſhal I ſay? or rather) your *heart*, that the meaneſt round about you have gained thus much, to ſay, *Now they know you*: But (alas) this *gain* hath occaſioned ſuch a conſiderable *loſs* in the things of the peace and joy of your real *Chriſtian Friends*, that they have cauſe in abundance to wiſh for their former ignorance concerning you, and that you had given them no ſuch *new* Character of your ſelf, as now you have done. Indeed it cannot but deduct much from the comfort of your cordial Friends, to ſee you, who in former days had obtained a large proportion of that *Name*, which the Wiſeman ſaith, *is better than precious Oyntment* †: yea, who were eſteemed as a *Maſter in Iſrael*; an Armed Souldier of *Jeſus Chriſt*; and an *eminent Labourer in Goſpel-things*; who for your work-ſake, were had in *double honour*; I ſay, to ſee you, now the Sun of your life ſeems paſt its *Meridian*, and the evening of your dayes to approach; when (for any thing you know to the contrary) your *Race* was almoſt run; your *Victory* well nigh obtained; and your *Crown* near ready to put on; then to for-

† *Eccleſ.* 7. 1.

ſake your Colours, face about, and change your courſe; to *loſe the things that you had wrought*, turn *Renegado* from thoſe Truths of *Chriſt* which you had profeſſed at ſo high a rate of zeal and fervency, and to pull down and deſtroy, as with both hands, what formerly you had been labouring ſo many years to build up and plant: in ſhort, to ſee the ſavour of your † *Prov.* 10. 7. *precious Name* here, turned into a *noiſom & ſtinking Dunghil*†: and your eternal Crown hereafter hazarded, if not forfeited * 1 *Cor.* 9. *ult.* and loſt *: how can it but grieve the hearts and ſad the ſpirits of ſuch as ſincerely love either you or Jeſus Chriſt? *Heb.* 6. 4, 5, 6. And ſorry we are that Mr. *Gurnal* ſhould daſh his foot againſt that ſtone at which the *prophane Formaliſts* of this world, *Rev.* 2. 10, 26. ſtumble and fall from day to day: What! could you not indure one encounter for Chriſt? Could you not ſtand againſt *chap.* 3. 10, 11. one on-ſet? Where was your *Spiritual Armour* become? Had you parted with it all to others, and kept none of it for your own uſe, when you ſtood in moſt need? Had you forgot your Lord and Maſter, who when the great Enemy tempted him (not only with a ſmall pittance of this worlds glory, which was the higheſt of your temptation, but) even with † *Matth.* 4. 8, 9. *all the Kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them*†: yet could not prevail with him to *conform* in the leaſt? And what can you plead by way of excuſe for your *Conformity*, but might have bin argued in our Saviors caſe with ten degrees of plauſible probability more than can be in yours? Can you plead the *lawfulneſs* of your conformity in it ſelf? [Surely all ſuch pleadings will make you aſhamed, being in direct oppoſition to the Truth; as now begins to be evidently viſible and manifeſt to all conſciencious and ſeeing Chriſtians:] But in our Saviours caſe, what hindred but Chriſt might *lawfully* make † *Matth.* 4. 3. * *Joh.* 2. 9. *bread* of *ſtones*†, ſince at another time he made *wine* of *water**? —Can you ſay, You conform, not to get honour or great eſtates in the world, but only for a competent maintenance for your ſelf and family, which muſt not ſtarve; for you are bound to take care of, and provide for them? [Is not this ſinfully to diſtruſt the providence of God, as if he had not provided honeſt and lawful means for the maintenance of his People?] yet however, in our Saviours caſe, it was only for

bread

bread, not ſuperfluity of dainties; and that too, not to pleaſe his appetite only, but to ſatisfie hunger †. —Can you yet again argue, They are things *indifferent* that you ſubmit unto? [This will certainly put all the wit, and parts, and learning you have (with all the Colledge of *Epiſcopal* Doctors beſides) upon the Rack to juſtifie and make good, and yet will it be too hard for you all at laſt.] But in our Saviours caſe, it was only *ſtones* that he was ſolicited to take and make bread of: and what more *indifferent* thing could he have taken than a few ſtones? No man would claim a propriety in them; who could have charged him with wronging them in ſuch a caſe? Once more, Can you plead you break no *poſitive* Law? [Your proof for that is to ſeek, and will never be found ſo long as *Lordly Epiſcopacy* lives in the world.] But in our Saviours caſe, What *poſitive* Precept had he broke?— But come on a little further; Will the *goodneſs of your end* juſtifie your Conformity? Is it your zeal to the Goſpel, and the preaching thereof? [This Argument is light as vanity it ſelf: for, as *the wrath of man worketh not the Righteouſneſs of God* †: So the Goſpel of *Chriſt* is no wayes promoted by mans ſin; We muſt not do evil that good may come of it; nor *ſin* to make *grace abound* *] But in our Saviours caſe, the end propoſed was as good as yours can be, *viz.* the manifeſtation of himſelf to be the ſon of God. *If thou be the Son of God, command that theſe ſtones be made bread* †. Yet notwithſtanding all theſe plauſible pretences, being impoſed upon him by the Devil, he diſdains all *conformity*. But this grand Adverſary ſends a ſmaller force againſt you, only ſome of his Emiſſaries and Agents to aſſault you, with a leſs prevailing motive, to a more notorious act (at leaſt leſs capable of a plauſible plea) impoſing on you things manifeſtly unlawful; derogatory unto Chriſt; deſtructive to the power of Godlineſs; ſcandalous to the World; offenſive to the Saints; uncharitable to your Impoſers; and prejudicial to your own Soul: And you cowardly, not like a man, much leſs like a good *Souldier* of *Jeſus Chriſt*, retreat, even before the fight began; the very threatnings of your enemy wrought the conqueſt over you, cauſing you to quit the Banner of Chriſt,

† *Mat.* 4. 2.

† *Jam.* 1. 20. * *Rom.* 6 1, 2.

† *Matth* 4. 3.

and like (if not worſe than) *Iſſachar's Aſs*, bow downan proſtrate your ſelf unto the impoſitions of his adverſary.

But Sir, methinks I am in an extaſie of admiration at the thoughts of your *Conformity* above many others, when I conſider your former Zeal and Eminency: What, Mr. *Gurnal* conform! concerning whom men were almoſt ready to ſay, (as ſometimes *Peter* ſaid of himſelf) *though all men forſake* Chriſt, renounce the Covenant, and ſubmit to Epiſcopal conformity, yet Mr. *Gurnal* will not. How did you, when time was, preach up, *Curſe ye Meroz, &c?* How many Souldiers did you (by Arguments and Exhortations) thruſt forth into the Warrs? How did you voluntarily, and zealouſly both take the Covenant, and importunely urge and preſs it upon others? Doth it become the ſame perſons one day to ſing *Hallelujah*, and cry *Hoſanna to the Son of David* †; and another day to cry, *Crucifie him, crucifie him**? Give me leave to query with you, as ſometimes the Apoſtle did with the *Galatians*, (with a little variation of words) *Oh fooliſh* Gurnal, *who hath bewitched you, that you ſhould not* continue in *the Truth*, before the eyes of whoſe mind *Jeſus Chriſt hath been evidently ſet forth? Are you ſo fooliſh? having begun in the Spirit, are you now made perfect by the fleſh? Have you* preached *ſo many things in vain*†? Are you now reſolved to pull down with all your might what you have (by your preaching and writing) been labouring to build up all your dayes? Or, do you not take a direct courſe hereunto? For he that ſhall voluntarily, ſolemnly, and in the preſence of God, *Swear to endeavour the Reformation of Religion, according to the Word of God, and the Example of the beſt Reformed Churches; the extirpation of Prelacie, and Superſtition, or the Government of the Church by Arch-Biſhops, Biſhops, their Chancellors and Comiſſaries, &c.* and not only ſo, but ſhall importunely preſs the ſaid *Oath* upon others; and continue in the zealous promoting thereof for near twenty years together; and yet after all this, conform to, and live in the practiſe of what he had thus *ſolemnly Sworn* to *extirpate*, he doth in effect declare himſelf to be a *Falſe Prophet*, and one who is either weake in judgment, and not able to diſtinguiſh between good and

† Matth. 21. 9.

*Matth. 27. 22, 23

†Gal. 3. 1, 2, 3.

and evil: or elſe, which is worſe, of a debauched Conſcience; ſining againſt his own light, yea againſt his *ſolemn Oath*: either of which render him moſt unworthy to be called a *Miniſter of Chriſt*, and muſt needs make it a very dangerous, or enſnaring thing, for ſuch as fear God in truth, to attend upon his preaching. For if Epiſcopal ordination of Miniſters make it unlawful for *Chriſtians* to ſit under their Miniſtry, as is eaſie to demonſtrate beyond contradiction: How much more unlawful is it to attend upon the Miniſtry of ſuch an *Epiſcopal Conformiſt*, who hath laid the foundation of his Conformity, in the ruins of his own Conſcience, by breaking ſo ſolemn an Oath?—But Sir, Will you be pleaſed to take a view of ſome few of your own lines, firſt preached, and afterwards printed to the veiw of the World, preſſing the Country to be careful in their choice of a Parliament man: thus you argue†: *Conſider the Solemn Obligation that lies upon us, , by a National Covenant, (famous through the Chriſtian world, and we infamous for the breach of it) to promote and procure with our utmoſt endeavours the Reformation of the Land. God hath, I believe, moſt of your hands to ſhew for this, and dareſt thou who haſt bound thy ſelf in ſuch a Covenant, give thy voice for an unworthy man to ſit in Parliament, whom thy conſcience, (if thou wouldſt have patience to hear it) will tell thee, he will never be the man that will help on that work with any Vote of his, yea that is an enemy to it, and fears it more than deſires it? if thou haſt got the Maſtery of thy Conſcience ſo far as to do this bold act, let me tell thee what thou doſt; thou comeſt this day to declare in the face of all the Country, yea, before God, Men and Angels, that thou art a FORSWORN VVRETCH; and if thou getteſt this brand upon thy forehead once, go where thou wilt, thou draggeſt a chain after thee, that will bind thee over to the fearful expectation of God's Wrath; that (come it ſooner or later) will take hold on thee. And now tell me, hadſt thou not better have been aſleep in thy bed, yea, ſick in thy bed, yea, dead in thy grave, than to have come hither to do ſo unhappy a dayes work? O think when thou goeſt this day to give thy Suffrage for any, that thou didſt ſee the Covenant with thy hand at it, ſpread before thee, &c.* This and more to the ſame effect in the foreſaid Sermon.——

† Your Sermon at *Stowmarket*, *Aug.* 20*th.* 1656. printed and ſold at the Bible in *Cornhill*, near the *Royal Exchange* in *London*, pag. 26, 27.

Upon

Upon which, Sir, give me leave to reason a little with you; Did the simple *breach* of the Covenant render men *infamous*? What then shall the *renunciation* or *abjuration* of it do? If a man must *master his conscience* before he could give his *vote* for a Parliament man, that would not help forward the work of the *Covenant*; to what degree must that Conscience be *seared* that can *renounce* or *abjure* it? If he that should only give his Suffrage in this case, declared in the *face of all the Country, yea before God, Men and Angels,* that he was a *FORSWORN WRETCH*; How many degrees more vile than a *forsworn wretch* is he that shall appear in the Pulpit to break this Oath, and shall under his hand renounce it? If the former *draggs a Chain after him, that will bind him over to the fearful expectation of God's wrath*; how much *sorer punishment*, and dreadful indignation shall he be thought worthy of, that shall accept authority to preach from those, whose *extirpation* he swore to endeavour? If it were better that a man *had been dead in his grave*, than give his vote as aforesaid; were it not much better that the *Abjuror* or *Renouncer* had been thrown into the Sea, with a Millstone about his neck, before ever he had submitted to *Episcopal conformity*, or subscribed the *Renunciation*? — But, Sir, can you *mock God*, and *dissemble with men*, and think to go unpunished? *Be not deceived* †. It is the *Fool* that *makes a mock at sin**. What then must he be that makes a mock of God and Godliness? Or are not you partaker in a high degree, and more than ordinary manner in the wickedness of this iniquity? Preach and unpreach: Build up, and pluck down: Reform Superstitions in Worship, and conform to Superstitious Worship: Swear, and forswear: *solemnly Covenant*, and *with hands lifted up to the most high God, swear*, that you will *sincerely, really, and constantly endeavour a Reformation according to God's Word*; and the *extirpation of Popery, Prelacy, and Superstition, &c.* and then abjure, or renounce this Covenant, and consequently this Reformation: which to do, what is it less than to renounce or forswear all obedience to God's Law? Oh desperate Atheism! Oh abominable Prophaneſs! *HEAR, O HEAVENS!* and *give ear O Earth*; and let all the Inhabitants

†*Gal.* 6. 9.

**Prov.* 14. 9.

habitants of the world be aſtoniſhed: Was there ever ſuch groſs impiety perpetrated under the vizour of Godlineſs? May we not (with ſome alteration) allude to that of the Wiſeman, and ſay, *Many* ſons of the Church (ſo called) have done wickedly, but thoſe of this age have *ſurmounted them all*†. Was there ever any day wherein it might be more truly ſaid (with the Prophet *Hoſea*, ch. 9.7.) *The Prophet is a fool, the Spiritual man is mad, for the multitude of thine iniquity, &c?* And again, *the Lord ſaid, The Prophts propheſie lies in my Name, I ſent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither ſpake unto them: They propheſie unto you a falſe Viſion and Divination, and a thing of nought, and the deceit of their heart**. And thus ſaith the Lord, *The Prieſts teach for hire, and the Prophets divine for money: yet will they lean upon the Lord, and ſay, Is not the Lord among us*†? But *Wo unto the Paſtors that deſtroy and ſcatter the Sheep of my Paſture, ſaith the Lord**. And *Wo unto the fooliſh Prophets, that follow their own ſpirit, and have ſeen nothing. O Iſrael, thy Prophets are like Foxes in the deſarts.— They have ſeen vanity, and lying divinations, ſaying, The Lord ſaith; and the Lord hath not ſent them: and they have made others to hope, that they would confirm the word. Therefore thus ſaith the Lord God, Behold, I am againſt you, and mine hand ſhall be upon the Prophets that ſee vanity, and that divine lies: they ſhall not be in the Aſſembly of my People, &c.*†

† *Prov.* 31. 29.

* *Jer.* 14 14.

† *Micah* 3. 11.

* *Jer.* 23. 1.

† *Ezek.* 13. 3, 4.

And as *Chriſt* ſometimes wept over *Jeruſalem*, ſo may we not weep over the Inhabitants of *Lavenham*, together with all other places, who are led (by ſuch *blind*, ſhall I ſay? nay but) by ſuch *prophane* and *hypocritical* Guides? Juſtly may we take up the complaint of the Prophet, *O my People, they which lead thee cauſe thee to err, and deſtroy the way of thy paths.* Thy Teacher (O *Lavenham*) doth *cauſe thee to err, and deſtroy the way of thy paths*; by tempting thee (if not in words, yet by actions and practices, which have the louder voice) to *deſpiſe the Covenant of thy God*, in building up thoſe things, the extirpation whereof he ſolemnly ſwore to endeavour. And now what remains? But (to allude to that of the Prophet, *Mic.* 2. 10.) *Ariſe ye and depart, for this is not*

Iſa. 3. 12. *& 9.* 16. *Mic.* 3. 5.

your

your rest: because it is polluted, it shall destroy you even with a sore destruction. Let all that fear God forsake the tents of these men; and say every one to his own soul; *Oh my soul, come not thou into their secret: unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united*†. But *flee out of the midst of Babylon, and deliver every man his soul: be not cut off in her iniquity**. Take the counsel of God *Rev.* 18. 4. and obey the exhortation of the Apostle 2 *Cor.* 6. 17. so shall you escape the wrath to come, and obtain a Crown of glory, *When the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the LORD.*

†Gen 49. 6.
*Jer. 51. 6.

VALE.

August 5. 1663.

The Substance of a second Letter, which (with some small enlargement) was sent to Mr. WILLIAM GURNAL *sometime after the former.*

SIR,

IT is like those few lines I lately sent you, will occasion a double consultation of thoughts within you; *viz.* 1. From whom they should come; and why he concealeth his Name? 2. What reasons should move him to such an undertaking?

To the former, If you desire to know him, this is his character: He is one that feareth God; and desireth to bear a testimony for him: one that dares say, *It is right to obey God rather than man.* And if he be enquired of concerning the *Priests*, he saith, *Verily let God be true, though every man be found a lier*; who hath said, *the Priests have polluted the Sanctuary*; *they have done violence to the Law.*† — *As troopes of robbers waite for a man, so the company of Priests murder in the way by consent: For they commit lewdness.** — *My People are destroyed for lack of knowledge: Because thou hast rejected knowledge, I also will reject thee, that thou shalt be no Priest to me: seeing that thou hast forgotten the Law of thy God*† — *And now O ye Priests, this commandment is for you. If ye will*

†Zeph. 3. 4.
*Hos. 6. 9
†Hos. 4. 6

not

*not hear, and if ye will not lay it to heart, to give glory unto my Name, ſaith the Lord of Hoſts, I will even ſend a curſe upon you, and will curſe your Bleſſings.**— Yea once more, if you would know him, he is one that dares not do *this bold act*, to *declare in the face of all the Country yea before God, men, and Angels, that he is a FORSWORN Wretch*, by renouncing the Covenant of his God. **Mal.* 2. 1, 2.

But for the reaſon why he hath thought meet at preſent, to conceal his Name; He needs no other Apologie, then this, That you your ſelf cannot be ſo ignorant, or weak, as not to know that theſe are times wherein *Truth faileth, and he that departeth from evil maketh himſelf a prey*†. How much more are they that reprove the wickedneſs of the Prieſts, like to expoſe themſelves to the rage and malice of their ungodly Perſecutors? And it ſeems inconſiſtant with wiſdome and prudence for a man to lay himſelf open to the cruelty of unreaſonable men, when he may innocently avoid it. †*Iſa.*59.15.

For the latter of the two things above mentioned, there were theſe three or four reaſons or conſiderations, that prevailed with me to write the ſaid Letter unto you. *Viz.* 1. The honour of God, whoſe Name you had greatly prophaned; and whoſe Glory you had trampled under foot: For what greater affront, or indignity could you offer unto God, then not onely to deſpiſe his commands, but renounce Reformation according to his Word, and bow down before his adverſaries? 2. The intereſt of *Chriſt*, and his Goſpel, which were like to ſuffer very much by your ſinful Apoſtacie and backſliding: If ever there was a *man born to do Religion a miſchief* (as you uſe the expreſſion borrowed from another) are not you the man? *who by profeſſing high, and living low, in ſordid practiſes, have given Religion ſuch a wound in its reputation, as is not like to be cured while you are above ground*† Was not your pen over-ruled in that expreſſion, as it were prophetically to ſet forth your owu future character? or to draw the lineament of your own face? 3. The Spiritual good and preſervation of the ſouls of men, eſpecially ſuch as were in moſt eminent danger of being enſnared through your evil †See your Book, entituled, *The Chriſtian in compleat Armor*, the third part. Epiſtle to the *Reader*, pag. 2.

evil example, was another cause moving me to write the said lines unto you: Your sinful example may occasion the destruction of many Souls; When the *Priests reject the knowledge* of the Lord, *the People perish.* † *The Leaders of this People cause them to erre*; saith the Text; and what follows? *they that are led of them are destroyed:* * and no marvel though they that are *led* fall into the ditch, when he that *leadeth* them is *Blind*. † 4. And lastly, Your own restoration and recovery (if not too late) *from the snare of the Devil*, whom you have suffered to take you captive, as his will and pleasure was; this was another motive enducing me to the same undertaking. O how would it rejoyce, not my heart onely, but the minds of all your Christian Friends and acquaintance that fear God in truth, to see you reclaimed from the evil of your way, and brought back again from *Babylon* to *Zion*; reduced from your late extravagancies, to walk in the way of Godliness, from which you have so lately *erred and strayed like a lost Sheep*. And the Lord grant that you may never get *the mastery of* your own *Conscience* so far *as to do* (or rather persist in) that *bold act*, which your self prophesied long agoe would *dragg a chain after it that will bind over to the fearful expectation of Gods wrath, that* (*come it sooner or later*) *will take hold on* all impenitent Backsliders, and Hypocrites in heart. They *shall be filled with* their *own wayes.* † And the *Soul* of God *shall have no pleasure in them.* * But for a close I recommend two passages of Scripture more to your serious consideration. *And now what hast thou to do in the way of Egypt, to drink the waters of Sihor? Or what hast thou to do in the way of Assyria, to drink the waters of the River? Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy Backslidings shall reprove thee: know therefore and see, that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, saith the Lord God of Hosts.* †— *The Priests lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the Law at his mouth:* — *But ye are departed out of the way: ye have caused many to stumble at the Law: ye have corrupted the* COVENANT *of* LEVI, *saith the Lord of Hosts. Therefore have I also made you* CONTEMPTIBLE *and* BASE *before all the People.* †

† *Hos.* 4. 6.
* *Isa.* 9. 16.
† *Matth* 15. 14.
† *Prov.* 14. 14.
* *Heb.* 10. 38.
† *Jer.* 2. 18, 19.
† *Mal.* 2 7, 8, 9.

Sir,

Sir, I ſhall not burden you any further at preſent, ſave only to make this one requeſt unto you, *i. e. Remember from whence you are fallen, and Repent, and do your firſt works*, † leſt the Lord *Jehovah* come forth againſt you to *avenge the quarel of his Covenant.* * Sir, *knowing* (in part) *the terror of the Lord*, give me leave to *perſwade* you†. In the fear of God I entreat you; and in tenderneſs of ſpirit beſeech you, *to ſearch and try your wayes, and turn again to the Lord*+. Carefully peruſe, and conſcientiouſly weigh the import of what hath been repreſented unto you in theſe Papers, and take it as an *Item* from God to work your repentance, and reſtoration: and as you tender the glory of God: the honour of Jeſus Chriſt: the joy and conſolation of the Saints: and the everlaſting Salvation of your own Soul: Yea, as you dread the fiery indignation, and fierce wrath of the Lord almighty, take heed of deſpiſing or neglecting this Sober and Chriſtian Counſel, thus providentially adminiſtred unto you. But ſay with repenting Ephraim, *What have I to do any more with Idols?* * with *Common Prayer?* with *Superſtitious inventions?* Caſt them all from you as polluted; and *truſt in the Lord for ever; for in the Lord Jehovah is everlaſting ſtrength*†. Sir, in hope of this happy and deſirable effect, I ſhall wait a little ſeaſon, in expectation of, and diligently obſerving, what return you will pleaſe to make hereunto.

† *Rev.* 2.5.
* *Levit.* 26.25.
† 2 *Cor.* 5.11.
+ *Lam.* 3.40.
* *Hoſ.* 14.8.
† *Iſa.* 26 4.

VALE.

Auguſt 27. 1663.

An APPENDIX.

READER,

THou haſt in theſe foregoing Letters ſome account how zealous Mr. *Gurnal* was for that *Covenant* which he hath now *Renounced:* Solemnly, and in the Name of God charging others to obſerve it; preſenting to their Conſideration a *Chain* that ſhould hold them, if the *Covenant* would not: wherefore I cannot ſee how he

will escape the the *righteous Judgment of God* that doth *the same things* himself for which he *judgeth another*: Whether the Covenant was condemned, and the renunciation thereof enjoyned right or wrong, just or unjust in the opinion of other men, is not much to him in this case, because he ought to have kept his Conscience undefiled, whatever other men did: if he believed it to be his duty to *observe a day*, he ought to have *observed* it, though another *esteemed every day alike*: But I perceive there are many whose zeal did not *BLAZE* it self as his seemed to do, that are more affraid to break an Oath then he is; and who very much question, whether the *Parliament* did so well consider things as they should have done, when they condemned the *Covenant*; because God hath given us in the Scriptures the Records of his Vengeance for the breach of two Covenants: one of which was obtained by the *Gibeonites* through false and subtil deceiveableness†; and entered into by *Joshua*, and the Princes of *Israel* contrary to that expres Command of God, *Exod.* 23. 32, 33. (as Mr. *George Withers*, in his Remonstrance to this present Parliament well observeth) and when *Saul* violated it, he did it in his *zeal to the children of Israel and Judah*, 2 Sam. 21. 2. but for all this, the blood of *Saul's* house must go to appease the wrath of God for it: as appears in the forementioned chapter. The other was an Oath exacted from the King of *Judah* (when he was made King) by the potency of the King of *Babylon*, who had him then in his hand; the breach whereof greatly provoked the wrath of God against him: as is evident, *Ezek.* 17. 16.

† *Josh.* 9 3, 4, &c

But (*Reader*) I shall leave this, and tell thee, that the foregoing Papers (having lain dormant a considerable space of time) are now crept out into the world, and become exposed to thy view, with the addition of this *Appendix*.

Yet lest the publication hereof should offend any man, I shall first give answer to an Exception that possibly may be raised by some against the printing of them: and touch a little upon that Text by which Mr. *Grey* seemed to plead the justifica-

juſtification of his Conformity: And then (by occaſion hereof) give thee a brief obſervation or two concerning the *Church of England* in general, and ſo conclude.

For the firſt of theſe; Peradventure ſome may be ready to ſay, That is not well done of any man to uncover the nakedneſs of a Brother, or to lay open the infirmities of others; but if Mr. *Gurnal* had been *overtaken in a fault* he ſhould have been *reſtored in the ſpirit of meekneſs*, according to the Rule of the Apoſtle, *Gal.* 6. 1.

For anſwer hereunto, firſt, by way of Conceſſion; It is very true, that it becomes not a Chriſtian Spirit to publiſh or divulge the *infirmities of Brethren*; but on the contrary to *Cover the Shame of their nakedneſs*, and endeavour their reſtoration when *overtaken in a fault*: Therefore had Mr. *Gurnal* onely ſlipt or been *overtaken*, or ſurprized by an infirmity onely, I, for my part, ſhould have been an *Antagoniſt* unto him that ſhould have ſought to ſpread his nakedneſs in that kind before the world.

But,

Secondly by way of exception, I anſwer, That this is not the caſe before us; firſt, becauſe the Crimes that Mr. *Gurnal* ſtands guilty of, are not infirmities onely, but of a far deeper dye then ſo: for ſins of infirmity only, are ſuch miſcarriages which men ſlip into at unawares, and out of which they endeavour to recover themſelves as ſoon as they can. But Mr. *Gurnal's* Crime being notoriouſly wicked and ungodly, (as appears by the foregoing Letters) alters the nature of the caſe.

Again ſecondly, That it is not only warrantable, but ſerviceable to God and the world, to diſcover the folly and madneſs of ſuch, who under colour and pretence of Religion, yeild up themſelves to ſin and wickedneſs, offering violence to their own conſciences, reſiſting the truth of the Worſhip and Service of God, by introducing empty ſhadows and reſemblances in the place and ſtead theteof, is evident beyond contra-

contradiction, from that of the Apostle, 2 *Tim.* 3. 8, 9. of which you may take farther observation at your leasure.

Yet further in the third place, When the sinful miscarriages of any men, shall have a proper tendancy in them (whilst concealed) to provoke others to, and encourage them in the same wayes of sin and unworthiness; in this case it becomes a duty upon men truly Conscientious, to endeavour their discovery; and consequently the preservation of others from being led to destruction by them. Thus the Apostle *Paul* to keep the *Galatians* from being turned out of the right way of the Gospel, relateth to them the miscarriage of *Peter*; who though he was a great Apostle, yet in this case he spared him not, neither to his own face, nor to others; as you may see *Gal.* 2. 14. And the like doth he do concerning the *Cretians*, Tit. 1. 11, 12, 13. see also to this effect 2 *Tim.* 3. ver. 1, 2, 3, 4, &c. with many more places of like import: Now this is the case before us; Mr. *Gurnal's* Sin was like to endanger many souls; and the manifestation of his folly, is a proper means to stop the progress thereof.

But once more in the fourth place; To speak properly, neither the designe, nor yet the import of these Letters, cannot reasonably be said, to be for the spreading or divulging of Mr. *Gurnal's* Sin; but they are rather an open rebuke for his Sin: The reason is plain, Because his Sin it self, is published by himself, his daily practice sounding forth the report thereof, as with a Trumpet from the house top; and if every man should be silent, yet his Surplice and Common-Prayer-book-devotion, in conjunction with his Sermons upon *Curse ye Meroz:* and his Sermon, at *Stow-market* with many Engagements besides, would speak with a loud voice. Yea, the *stones* that he hath laid in the *Presbyterian* building, will speak in this case. Therefore these Letters cannot properly be saide to make his Sin publick; or to *uncover his nakedness* in the sence of the objection. But the said Letters are indeed a rebuke for his sin: and being published, they are an *open rebuke.* Yet herein also it is to be considered, first, That they were written and sent him in a private way, not without some hope, or expectation (as appears in them, & in the

the Epiſtle) that he would have taken the *ſecret* reproof as a means to work his repentance and reformation: the Author in this expectation waites many months, but finding no fruit to ariſe from this his labour, but Mr. *Gurnal* rather grows worſe and worſe, he firſt expoſed them to the view of ſome friends more privately: and at length they become publick. By this (Reader) thou maieſt perceive that if *private* addreſſes would have done the work, this *publick* ſhame had not befallen him. Now it is a manifeſt caſe, that God himſelf expects that ſuch as know and fear him, ſhould reprove the ſins of others; ſee for this *Lev.*19.17. Yea, and as the caſe may be, *Publick* and *open rebukes*, will become the duty of *Chriſtians*, 1 Tim. 5.20. *Them that ſin, rebuke BEFORE ALL, that others alſo may fear.* So that by this time (Chriſtian Reader) I hope there is no *rock of offence*, or *ſtumbling-ſtone* left in the way, by reaſon or occaſion of theſe Papers, or the Printing of them.

As for that Scripture from which (it ſeems) Mr. *Grey* endeavoured to plead the juſtification of his Conformity, (or rather Deformity) *viz.* Becauſe we ought to be *ſubject to higher powers*, Rom.13.1. It is ſo ſtrange a deduction, that I much wonder how his Conſcience could ſuffer him to bring it for ſuch a purpoſe: For evident it is, that it will do him no ſervice at all in this kind, unleſs he ſuppoſe, and take for granted, 1. That by *Higher Powers* in this Text, is meant, not only all juſt, and righteous Authorities amongſt men, acting regularly, according to that truſt which is committed to them by God: but alſo all, and every the Magiſtrates and Rulers in the world, how wicked and unworthy ſoever they are, or how irregularly and unwarrantably ſoever they act. And 2dly. That whatſoever any of the *Higher Powers* in this ſenſe, ſhall at any time command or enjoyn thoſe that are under them to do, be it never ſo ſinful and ungodly, will nevertheleſs become their duty to do accordingly. By the help of theſe *Premiſes*, (I confeſs) *Mr. Grey* may eaſily prove his *Concluſion* from the forenamed Text; but I know no other *medium* (at leaſt, none without theſe) that will do him any ſervice in this kind. And certainly had not the

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god of this world blinded his eyes, from beholding the plain and visible discoveries of the mind of God in the Scriptures, he could never have avoided the sight of a *Non-sequitur* in his own Argument, for it is manifest that *Paul* himself (together with other Apostles and faithful Servants of God, as appears both in the Old and New Testament) did from time to time suffer very cruel handling from such *Higher Powers*, for refusing to be subject unto them in such a sense. But certainly some strong *Fascination* had laid hold of his intellectual faculty, when he entred upon so sensless a work.

But if these men, (together with that great fraternity of Brethren in the same iniquity with them) to keep themselves alive in honour and repute amongst sober and good men, shall say and plead, that they have now enquired more narrowly into the will and mind of God than formerly they had done, and that he hath so far blessed their labour and diligence herein, as to reveal unto them their former errour, and enlighten them with the knowledge of the Truth concerning the unlawfulness of the *Covenant*, and of their former wayes, and so brought them to repentance. I answer,

That this Plea is (in the Scripture-phrase) but to *adde drunkennesse unto thirst* and to make the sin of their act in *conforming* and *renouncing*, unmeasurably sinful, may evidently appear, by considering,

1. That it is a thing not to be supposed, being almost (if not altogether) incredible, that those who had been such zealous promoters and prosecuters of it, for so long a time, should (at least so many of them together) be truly convinced of the evil of such their way and course, just at that moment of time when an Act against it should take force, and not before: Nay, that they should be so fully resolved to stand by it, one Lords-day, as *Mr. Grey* seemed to be; and yet the very next be able to plead the justification of the contrary. There seems more reason to judge *Dr. Lee* a true Penitent, because he was somewhat more deliberate; and yet I believe there is scarce one sober man to be found, who dares presume so much as to think there was one dram of true Repentance in him; but (as far as my observation reach-

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eth) all men take him for a monſter of diſſimulation, ſtill remaining the ſame man he was before (and yet is a *Changling* too) meerly for wordly advantage. But

Secondly, It is little leſs than notorious Blaſphemy to aſcribe the manifeſtly frivolous and falſe imaginations of a mans own heart, unto God, or to his bleſſing, or to the illumination, or inſpiration of his Spirit. What is this but to bear the world in hand that there is an affinity between God and the Devil; and that the diſtance between them, is not ſo great, as is commonly believed? Or can ſuch a plea as that in the objection be any other than a frivolous conceit, or vain pretence, iſſuing out of the deceitful hearts of men themſelves; and not from God? For how can it enter into the thoughts of any ſober and conſiderate Chriſtian to believe that ſuch men who have continued many years in the zealous promoting of ſuch a way and Covenant, and (whileſt the Sun of wordly countenance ſhined upon it) bid defiance to all Arguments that roſe up againſt it; ſhould in a moment and as were in the twinkling of an eye (when that Sun ſet) be able clearly to diſcern the invalidity of all thoſe Arguments by which themſelves and others were wont to defend it; and to obtain ſo thorough and ſatisfying a conviction, as is abſolutely neceſſary to warrant a renunciation? He that will go about to demoliſh a building which himſelf hath been many years laying a ſtrong foundation for, and erecting thereupon, muſt (at leaſt) take time and leaſure to do it, otherwiſe it may tumble upon his head and cruſh him to peices. And more eſpecially, ſuch a ſudden and unexpected converſion, is not like to be wrought or produced by the warm influences of wordly advantage and promotion, or where the mountain of earthly glory, ſeems to be the moſt potent and prevailing motive therein: The converſion that is effected by this means, is more like to be the *off-ſpring of the god of this world*, then of him whoſe Name is *Jealous*. Therefore *Matth.* 4. 9.

Thirdly, Whereas this plea pretends that they enquired of God, about the lawfulneſs or unlawfulneſs, of their Covenant and Oath, and that in *renouncing* it, they have conformed themſelves to his Anſwer given in unto them con-

cerning it: I know not where, nor of whom, to borrow any such *Charity*, whereby I may be enabled to believe that they consulted any other Oracle about their renouncing, than that which *Demas* consulted when he forsook *Paul*, and other good *Christians*, and *imbraced this present world*.

Fourthly, (and lastly) It is most unworthy a Minister of such a Gospel, which is not *Yea and Nay*, but *Yea and Amen*, in all the Promises and Sayings of it; to engage himself, both unto God and men, by a most Solemn Covenant and Oath, for the performance of such things, of the lawfulness whereof he was not groundedly, throughly, and fully perswaded and assured, at the time of such his engagement, so that he might have no occasion to be seen playing fast and loose with Oaths. *Quod-libetical* actions, and matters of *doubtful disputation*, are ill-conditioned matter for Oaths. *It is a snare to the man who devoureth that which is holy, and* AFTER VOWS TO MAKE ENQUIRY, *Prov.*20.25. Especially a loose and slight-built Judgment touching the things we speak of, is most insufferable in such a Minister, who was not only free, and forward, even to observation, to swear the said Covenant himself, but was an *Arch Stickler* also, both by Preaching and Printing, to engage others in the same Oath and Covenant with him. Such a Minister or Teacher that shall quit himself at such a desparate rate of weakness and folly (if not of Atheisme and prophaneness) as this, hereby renders himself notoriously irregular for so sacred a work, and becomes the man to whom God speaketh thus: *What hast thou to do to take my Covenant in thy mouth, seeing thou hatest instruction, and hast cast my words behind thee?* Psal. 50. 16, 17. And he may demand of every Christian likewise: What hast thou to do to hear my Covenant preached, or declared, by the polluted lips of such a *Renegado* from his holy Profession? So that this plea of Repentance, however it may seem to salve their credits, it is like to prove to the greater damage of their Consciences. But I proceed,

And shall here give thee (Christian Reader) some observations briefly concerning the Church of *England*, and in order

order thereunto, I shall acquaint thee that not long since I had the view of a Manuscript in verse, containing the sad lamentation of the *Lay-man*, who (it seems) was not thoughtful at all of any inconveniency that would follow upon the removal of *Nonconformists* and *Non-renouncers* on *Bartholomew*-day, *anno* 1662. (by that legal mortality; which (as the swelling Sea when it breaketh over those Banks which God hath set for *Bars and doors* unto it, and said, *Hitherto shalt thou come but NO FURTHER*, doth much endamage the Country over which it getteth power; So this) did sweep away many precious, sober, and painful Ministers of the Gospel) but (as he there expresseth it in the name of the Country in general) was big with expectation, that as when *Elijah* was taken away, a double portion of his spirit rested on *Elisha*, So now should there be a *double portion* of those mens spirits that were removed, found in them that succeeded, and in this hope went to enjoy the blessing of it. But alas! when he came, he found *Elijah's Mantle* only stuft with straw; and in the Bed where holy *David* used to be, was nothing but a *lifeless Image*.

Job 38. 11.

2 *King.* 2.

As he was thus bemoaning his own, and his fellow Country mens loss, he was over-heard and sharply rebuked by a proud *Prelate*, who told him, that he much undervallued those that were now appointed for their Teachers: Which the plain-hearted *Layman* thought was so far from truth, and the contrary so manifest, that he proceeds on still, and tels the *Prelate* that the best of them, were those that either through ignorance, or against the light of their own Consciences had conformed, either for fear, or filthy lucre: and that if these were excepted, the rest were *Flagella proximorum*, so many scourges unto their neighbours, and plagues to those Parishes to which they respectively relate. Take it in his own words,

Take out those few, and every one oth' rest,
Call them not Parish Priests, but Parish Pests.

And a little after, taking notice of their Schollarship, he saith, That they have made so little proficiency in Christian learning, that they can scarce *decline Bacchus and Venus*; and

if so, then that Lesson which the Apostle hath set for all Christians, 1 *Thes.* 5. 22. in these words, ἀπὸ παντὸς εἴδους πονηροῦ ἀπέχεσθε, will be too hard for these Teachers themselves to learn.

Now if those that are *natural sons* of the *Church of England*, have learned so little *Christianity*, and those who are *sons by law*, are the best; (as this *Lay-man* affirmeth (and that his testimony herein is true, is the opinion of all in the Nation, (as far as I can perceive) that have their sences exercised (though but a little) to discern good and evil.) Then may we conclude that these, and such like, are the men that the Apostle speaks of, 2 *Tim.* 3. *Who resist the Truth as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses*; namely, by doing something like to Ministers of Christ, as *Jannes and Jambres* did something like to those miracles which *Moses* wrought: but notwithstanding this, *their folly* shall be *made manifest to all men, as theirs also was:* And if *Christians* will follow the Apostles direction, ver. 5. to *turn away from them*, they may hinder them from *proceeding any further*: and (methinks) those who stand disposed in heart and soul, to hearken to the counsel of God, should not dare to reject this injunction of the Apostle: Neither can they long continue to shroud themselves under the wings of such unnatural Brooders, unless they quite degenerate from those rational principles, which as they are men, God hath planted in them; but will seek for the waters of life in purer streams: like as young Ducks which though they have been hatched under a Hen, yet will not continue with her upon the dunghil, if they can but find the refreshing water-brooks.

And if those who are *sons by Law*, yeild to the Church of *England* her greatest glory, then hath she none that will much commend her; for these *coming by the By* (as we use to say) loudly proclaim her unto the world for a *Whorish Woman*: And how she will escape the Blot of being reputed an *Adulteress*, that can so freely receive (if not impudently invite) unto her other *lovers* besides Christ, and have Children by them (as she hath had by Kings and Rulers) I do not well understand: and there is this circumstance that aggravateth

vateth her ſin, to wit, that theſe whom ſhe hath entertained, are thoſe whom Chriſt had predeclared would be his *enemies*, † as by too ſad experience we find to be true; For now they have entered this unclean conjunction, how do they endeavour to deſtroy, and *baniſh* thoſe who are truly begotten by the overſhadowings of the Spirit of God? The only way that I know left her, to remove this *ignominious* brand, is, to *renounce* (as ſhe hath done the Covenant) all relation to *Chriſt* as her Husband; and then, though ſhe will not appear to be an *Adultereſs*, yet will ſhe plainly declare her ſelf to be (as indeed ſhe is) a *ſtrange Woman*, whom the Wiſeman deciphers, *Prov.* 5. and perſwadeth us by many weighty reaſons, to *remove far from her, and not come near the door of her houſe*, and chap. 7. declareth how the *Simple man void of underſtanding*, was allured and drawn in by her, *as an Ox to the ſlaughter*, or *as a fool to the correction of the ſtocks: till a dart ſtrike through his liver*. I could wiſh that *Chriſtians* would conſider theſe places, and apply them to ſpiritual caſes; for ſpiritual whoredome, is much more deſtructive than that which is corporally ſuch.

† *Matth.* 10. 17, 18.

One of thoſe conſiderations by which (amongſt many other weighty motives) the Wiſeman endeavours to diſſwade men from coming near the door of this *ſtrange womans* houſe, is this, *viz.* that *her ſteps take hold on Hell*, chap. 5. 5. *i.e.* by an *hypallage*, Hell taketh hold on her ſteps; meaning that her wayes are ſo near the brink of Hell, that no man can go in unto her, without eminent danger of falling irrecoverably into that lake of perdition. Now that the *Church of England* herein beareth this her *lewd Siſter* company, is ſufficiently evident to ſuch of the Servants of God, whoſe ſences are competently exerciſed in *diſcerning between things that differ*; as might eaſily be made appear by many demonſtrative conſiderations, which my intended brevity permits me not at preſent to inſiſt upon; Only beſides what hath been already hinted to this purpoſe, I here add, That the *Church of England* giveth heed to *doctrines of Devils*: Now whoſoever *doth* ſo, approacheth *very near the mouth of Hell*, and therefore it may well be ſaid, that their *ſteps take hold on*

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it: What those doctrines are, the Apostle giveth us to understand, 1 *Tim.* 4. 3. *forbiding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats:* both which are not only practised by this Church, but are things wherein she boasteth her self, and whereof she maketh open and publick profession. And the reason why they are called *Doctrines of Devils* may be, because they are of their dictating, and contradictory to those Constitutions which God hath appointed, implicitly taxing these with imperfection, and their Author with want of wisdome; hereby occasioning men to turn aside from the way of the Lord, which causeth him to withdraw from them, by which means the Devil getteth ground, and by degrees insensibly maketh them his captives to serve him at his pleasure: Now seeing these things are so plainly laid down by the Apostle for *Doctrines of Devils*, I cannot but think that this Church is judicially led unto these practices, that we may know she is *departed from the Faith, and avoid her.* The further evincing the truth of this Argument, as it relates to the *Chuch of England*; and the dissipating of all those colourable pretences by which some men (devoted to the love of this Strange Woman) seek to defend her, as one not at all concerned in the Scripture, lately quoted, is a work so easie and facile, that I judge it needless here any further to debate it: Nor yet to detain my Reader much longer in this matter, otherwise it were a near-hand consideration to shew that (together with others of the like demerit) the Apostle pointeth out this *Church of England* (in the Scripture mentioned) by bringing her practice to the touchstone of the 2d *vers. Speaking lies in hypocrisie, having their Consciences seared with a hot iron.* For what is it to *speak lies in hypocrisie*, but to pretend one thing in a fair and plausible manner, and to intend another? and that this is a practice unto which she is accustomed, is too too manifest to all men: For how frequently doth she hypocritically pretend *the honour of God, and good of Saints*; when her chiefest aim is to further some unworthy and carnal interest or other? for that her end is not the honour of God, is manifest from hence; because she doth not only bear with patience, but freely imbrace, and lovingly re-

receive, ſuch into her boſome-communion, who are Open Tranſgreſſors of the Law of God, and devote themſelves to the Prophanation of his Name and Glory in the world: but ſuch as are truly conſcientious, and fear God, ſhe can take no delight in; which could not be if the honour of God was the thing ſhe aimed at.

Again, If her *Conſcience were not ſeared with an hot Iron*, ſhe could never proceed with ſo little regret, to trample upon all thoſe Scriptures which riſe up in full oppoſition to moſt of her beloved wayes: nor could ſhe reſt ſo ſupinely and quietly, as ſhe ſeemeth to do, under the tranſaction of ſuch things in the Nation, partly (if not wholly) for her ſake, which muſt needs draw down the Vengeance of God upon it: of which nature is the cruel handling and baniſhing of perſons, for no other cauſe but their ſerving of God: a thing ſo abominable and unchriſtian, that ſome of their own party are aſtoniſhed at it, and ſeem to be very ſenſible that ſome ſore Judgement of God is like to follow upon it; becauſe thoſe whom they ſentence to Baniſhment, are *ſober:* and themſelves regardleſs of the Law of God, and a *prophane, ſwearing generation.*

But becauſe I am upon the pin of brevity, and in regard the parity and agreement between the *Church of England* and this *ſtrange woman*, is a thing ſo obvious and plain in it ſelf, I ſhall inſiſt no more upon it at preſent; only add, That ſeeing it is ſo, that this Church we ſpeak of, is a walking-mate of that ſtrange womans, whoſe *ſteps take hold on Hell*; let all that deſire to eſcape that pit of deſtruction, be warned hereby to take the Wiſeman's counſel, *Remove thy way far from her, and come not near the door of her houſe*, Prov. 5. 8.

But whileſt we are ſpeaking of the *Church of England*, it will not be amiſs to enquire where we may finde her, ſeeing there are ſome men of opinion, that there is no ſuch thing, as this Church we now ſpeak of, in *rerum natura*, among things that exiſt; but that we are impoſed upon in her name, by ſome other perſon: as the *Perſians* were in reſpect of their King when *Cambiſes* died; *Patizithes* the Vice-Roy making his own ſon King in the name of *Smerdis*, the brother:

†Heylen's *little Description of the great World.* pag. 638.

ther of *Cambises*, who (it seems) was slain †: Neither is their judgment in this case altogether without ground to support it, for (to use the terms of these sons of the Church themselves, so called) all the Laity wholly, and all the Clergie below the dignity of their Bishops, they call [*Sons of the Church*,] and the Bishops they call [*Fathers of the Church*] So that the Church her self appears by this to be a meer *nullity*; between the *Fathers* and the *Sons*, they devour the *Mother*, and leave her no being at all: and it would be well for the Nation if her Name were *Null* also.

Though some there be that think this no inconvenience at all, but plead that the same men may be *Fathers*, and *Sons* of the Church, and yet the *Church her self* too; which mystery seems meer confusion; because it is impossible there should be any Body in being, the Members whereof are its own Fathers, or Sons; much less both.

However, let us see what it is that themselves, and their Advocates take to be this Church of *England*, for the understanding of them herein, we must know, that they have a twofold acceptation of this Church, according to the nature of those things relating to her, which the occasion leadeth them to discourse of; for if they speak of the Orders or Ceremonies of the Church, they mean such things as are enjoyned or appointed to be used in their Ecclesiastical Assemblies (for we never hear of any thing decreed or appointed *BY the Church:)* Upon such occasions as these, by the *Church* they understand these *Ecclesiastical Assemblies.* But when they speak of the benefits or profits of the Church, by *Church* then, they understand those only who officiate in these Assemblies, and more especially the benefic'd Clergy, but chiefly and most principally the dignitaries, as Bishops and Deans, &c. the rest being no sharers in these.

This being the Church in their own sense, it is impossible they should by their Church-Laws, meddle with such as never come at their Assemblies, if they would take the Apostle *Paul* for their example, who saith, *What have I to do to judge* (*i. e.* to deal with) *them that are without? do not ye judge them that are within?* † meaning them only: but these men instead

†1 *Cor.* 5. 12.

inſtead of judging thoſe that are within, ſuffer them for the moſt part, to live in what ſinful courſe they pleaſe, without any puniſhment for it; much leſs do they refuſe to *eat with ſuch a brother that is a Fornicator, or Coveteous, or an Idolater, or a Railer, or a Drunkard, or an Extortioner*, which the Apoſtle chargeth the Church of *Corinth* to do, and in them all other Churches: But they on the contrary make it their main buſineſs to judge them that are without, as if they did it on purpoſe to contradict the Apoſtle's rule: By which it is evident, that this *Church of England*, as in her being, ſo in her practice, ſhe is an *alien from God*, and the Scriptures know her not: her riſe and original is not from above; and her ways and practices are governed by ſome other Rules, oppoſite to what are found in the Word of God.

But it would far ſurpaſs my intention of brevity, ſhould I take notice of all thoſe things which make her look with a very uncomely and deformed ſhape and countenance; for as ſhe is regardleſs of the Rule of the Apoſtle *Paul* (as was juſt now hinted) ſo neither doth ſhe make any proviſion that thoſe who walk with her, may be in a capacity to put that *Direction* of our Saviour into practice, recorded, *Matth.* 18. 15, 16, 17. *Moreover, if thy brother ſhall treſpaſs againſt thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he ſhall hear thee, thou haſt gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witneſſes every word may be eſtabliſhed. And if he ſhall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the Church: but if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as an Heathen man and a Publican.* For, firſt, the relation of *Brethren*, is loſt among perſons of her ſocieties; ſo that a man (under her covert) knoweth not where to find this *Brother*, by whom he ought thus to deal; nor 2ly. doth he know where to find the Church, to whom he ought to *tell the matter*; none of their Congregations bearing this name.

And laſtly, That which our Saviour hath here appointed for the utmoſt puniſhment, will not ſatisfie the revengeful minds of ſuch as comply with this Church, but by the example of their Mother, they proceed often times to undo,

their neighbours, and to drive them from their habitations: So that here is another of their misdemeanours (to say no worse) by which it appears that she is no Church of Christ's constitution, nor walketh in the order of his Gospel. I might heap up instances of this kind even unto wearinesse: For,

Should I run over each deformity,
Which on the Church of England *I espy,*
The time would fail me, life would be too short,
Hereof to give a just and full report.

Therefore to conclude; as that Generation of the *Jews*, in whose time our Saviour was conversant upon Earth, was so irregular that he knew not well unto whom to liken them; *Luke* 7. 31. But saith, vers. 32. *they are like unto Children sitting in the Market-place, &c.* even so, were he now again on the Earth I know not unto what he would liken this *Church of England* more fitly, than to those *lifeless Organs*, which themselves have set up in their *Cathedrals*, upon which one thus discanteth:

They make the outside of their Organs shine,
As sometime did Diana's *silver Shrine:*
But yet their breathless Wind-pipes make no noise,
Till wind by humane art, doth give them voice:
Men carnal form them, for mens carnal ends;
Men carnal act them: Bishops them defends:
Men carnal praise them, for advantage sake;
Men Godly, in them, can no pleasure take:
Heart, Soul, and Spirit-service must give way,
That carnal men may hear these Organs play.

Unto these may she well be likened: for, 1. The reason of her being is the same with them, *viz.* the carnal ends of men.

2. It is too apparent that men of carnal principles were her Formers, there is so little spirituality in her Make.

3. She hath no motion but what is given unto her by men; for she doth nothing as she is a Church, but hath all her orders made to her hand, without which she is able to say,

or

or do, nothing at all: altogether unlike that Gospel Church we read of *Act.* 15. who of their own authority assembled, and resolved upon a matter in question, and authorized some to declare this their resolution.

4. She hath few (if any) that will open their mouths on her behalf, but such as hope for worldly advantage thereby; and from these she may receive some weak applause.

5. She is also distastful to Sober and Godly men, even as the Organs are.

6. To make way for this Church, men are molested and hindered in the performance of those services to God, which are spiritual, and required of them by God himself, and which their Consciences enjoyn them to perform.

7. She hath the same Patriots, to wit, such a sort of Bishops, which the Word of God, and the Appointments of Jesus Christ, take no knowledge of: and from the appointment of any other, no Officer is to be received into his Church. In these seven particulars doth this *Church of England*, and her *Organs*, very well sute and agree; and therefore it is no wonder she is so greatly in love with them since they do so exactly bear her image. Therefore, *Save your selves from this untoward generation**. *Little Children keep your selves from Idols* †. For the day of the Lord is drawing on apace, wherein *he shall utterly abolish the Idols:* And the *loftiness of man shall be bowed down*, and the *haughtiness of men shall be made low:* and *the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day*; for he shall *arise to shake terribly the Earth:* Then shall men *cast their Idols of Silver, and their Idols of Gold, to the Moles and to the Bats:* and *go into the clefts of the Rocks, and into the tops of the ragged Rocks, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his Majesty**.

* *Act.* 2. 40.

† 1 *Joh.* 5. 21.

* *Isa.* 2.

FINIS.

ERRATA.

Pag. 7. line 20. for *inroad* read *inroads*. p. 8. in the marg. f. *Zech.* 4. 5. r. 5. 4. p. 12. l. 1. r. *down and*. p. 13. l. 17. dele *in*. p. 14. l. 16, 17. r. *extirpation*. p. 15. l. 9. r. *Prophets*. p. 20. l. 1. dele *the*. p. 21. l. 5. r. *it is not*. l. *ult.* f. *theteof* r. *thereof*. p. 23. l. 16. f. *the way* r. *thy way*.

12/6/52. ad/ ~ 86

6 JY 55